

W. Jay Sydeman

Journey Down the American River
for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Viola and Cello
(1997)

In the 1980's I was teaching at the Steiner College outside of Sacramento... wrote a piece for the Sacramento Symphony, 52 choral works based on Steiner's weekly meditations, and this "journey" for a local chamber group. It is descriptive of the American River as I saw it... a bucolic first movement and turbulent second for flute, clarinet and three strings.

I believe it is as much fun to play as to hear with themes introduced and developed as the piece unfolds. Stylistically it is a sort of tonality extended, but clearly there. It is not particularly demanding technically but creating the proper ensemble would take some working out which could be enjoyable for the performers.

– W. Jay Sydeman, September 2017

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the *New York Times*, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is a member of Nevada County Composers Cooperative, a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino.

Duration: I. Andante – circa 7:15
II. Allegro – circa 6:45

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I.

Andante $\text{♩} = c. 66$

The first system of the score features five staves: Flute (Fl), Clarinet in Bb (Cl in Bb), Violin (Vln), Viola (Vla), and Cello (VC). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a metronome marking of approximately 66 beats per minute. The Flute part begins with a melodic line marked *mp*. The Clarinet part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a trill (*tr*) in the second measure. The Violin and Viola parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment, also marked *mp*. The Cello part plays a simple bass line, marked *mp* and *pizz.* (pizzicato).

Note: Brackets denote primary voice

The second system continues the musical score. It features the same five staves. The Flute part has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) in the second measure. The Clarinet part continues its accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) in the second measure. The Violin and Viola parts continue their eighth-note accompaniment. The Cello part continues its bass line, marked *arco* (arco) in the second measure. The system concludes with a change in time signature to 3/4.

7

pizz.

trem.

10

mp sub.

p sub.

arco

p sub.

13 A

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 13 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 14 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 15 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 16 has a *mf* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of five staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 17 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 18 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 19 has a *mp* dynamic. Measure 20 has a *mp* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Specific performance instructions include *pizz.* (pizzicato) in the second staff of measure 17, *arco* (arco) in the second staff of measure 18, and *trem.* (trémolo) in the second staff of measure 20.

20

mp

p

pizz.

arco

23

tr

6

3

3

pizz.

25

Violin I: *mf*

Violin II: *pp*, *mf*

Violin III: *pizz.* *p*, *arco* *mf*, *pizz.* *arco*

Viola: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*

Cello/Double Bass: *arco* *mf*, *mf*, *pizz.* *mf*

28

rit.-----

Violin I: *pp*

Violin II: *mp*, *p*

Violin III: *trem.* *p*, *pizz.* *mf*

Viola: *mp*, *mf*

Cello/Double Bass: *mf*, *mp espr.*

B
31 *a tempo*

poco sul pont., at frog
p

poco sul pont., at frog
arco
p

35 **C**

pp

ord.
mp

ord.

sim.

39

mf

pizz.

42

D

mf

mf

mp

pizz.

arco

arco

mf

mp

mp

mf

dolce

47

Violin I: *p*

Violin II: *p*

Viola: *p*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*

Measures 47-52 include various dynamics and performance instructions such as *p*, *mp*, *f*, *pizz.*, and *arco*. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 51.

E

53

Violin I: *pp*

Violin II: *mp*

Viola: *mp*

Cello/Double Bass: *mp*

Measures 53-56 include various dynamics and performance instructions such as *mp*, *pp*, *p distant*, *mf*, *pizz.*, and *poch. vib.*. A sextuplet of eighth notes is marked with a '6' in measure 54.

F

58

58

f

ff

arco *f* 3

arco *f* 3

f

p

pizz.

60

rall.-----

mf

mp

pizz. *mp*

pizz. *mp*

G
63 *a tempo*

mp

p

arco

p

arco

p

68

p

senza vib.

senza vib.

p

11

Musical score for measures 11-16. The score consists of three systems. The first system has two staves (treble and bass clef) with rests. The second system has three staves (treble, middle, and bass clef) with triplet eighth notes. The third system also has three staves with triplet eighth notes. Dynamics include accents and hairpins.

17

Musical score for measures 17-22. The score consists of three systems. The first system has two staves (treble and bass clef) with rests. The second system has three staves (treble, middle, and bass clef) with triplet eighth notes. The third system also has three staves with triplet eighth notes. Dynamics include accents, hairpins, and markings for piano (*p*) and forte (*f*). The time signature changes to 3/4.

23 **B**

f

f

mf

mf

mf

27

tr

mf

mf

mf

mf

32

mp

mp

p

p

p

37

f

f

mf

mf

mf

D Moderato ♩ = c. 96
by the river's banks; crickets & frogs

49

p *p³* *mf* *p³*

E the still nite

53

f *mp* *pp* *pp* *p* *p*

Con sord. pizz. Con sord.

57

Violin I: *pp* (tremolo), *pp* (sustained), *mp* (sustained)

Piano: *pp* (triplet), *pp* (sustained), *mp* (sustained)

Bass: *pp* (triplet), *pp* (sustained), *mp* (sustained)

Violin II: *pp* (sustained), *pp* (sustained), *mp* (sustained)

61

F

Violin I: *mp* (melodic line), *mp* (melodic line), *mp* (melodic line)

Piano: *p* (quintuplet), *p* (sustained), *p* (sustained)

Bass: *pp* (quintuplet), *pp* (sustained), *pp* (sustained)

Violin II: *p* (sustained), *p* (sustained), *p* (sustained)

65

65

68

G

68

G

mp

Senza sord. *p dolce*

p

Senza sord.

75

p

p

mf

p

mf

p

espr.

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

mf

p

mf

p

81

p

pp

p

mp

p

86

mp

p

mp

pizz. *mf* *arco* *p*

pizz. *mf* *arco* *p*

pizz. *mf* *arco* *p*

H

the rivers nite
the rivers peace

90

ppp

95 *poco rit.*----- **I** *a tempo*

Musical score for measures 95-98. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a piano (p) accompaniment and a melody. The piano part consists of sustained chords in the right hand and moving lines in the left hand. The melody in the upper staves includes sixteenth-note runs and a triplet. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*.

99

Musical score for measures 99-102. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a piano (p) accompaniment and a melody. The piano part includes triplets and sustained chords. The melody includes triplets and a final section marked *pizz.*. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*.

104

J

mf

mf

pp

p

109

pizz.

arco

pp

p